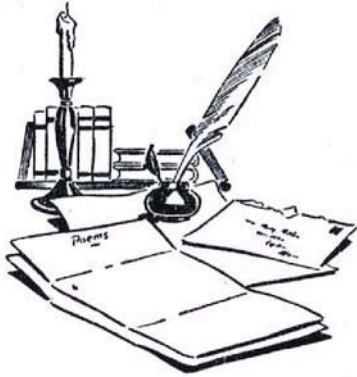


## Letters from our readers ...



Dear publishers of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*:

I received your lovely publication in my mailbox today. But before I comment on your publication, let me tell you a bit about myself. I am a fourth year psychology major studying at Regent University, a private Christian university in Virginia Beach, VA. I have a full academic scholarship, I was president of an international honor society, and I am graduating at the top of my class. I work at a domestic violence shelter where abused women and children can find respite from their so-called male protectors.

All my accomplishments have been possible specifically because I was called by God to leave my family and pursue my higher calling. That stated, I take offense to your November/December issue of *The Remnant* where women who work outside the home are accused of buying into Satan's lies. I would like to welcome you to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where America has made great strides in moving away from Greek ideals of viewing women as less worthy than men. God never says women and men should have separate callings or roles. In fact, the Bible clearly states that there is no male or female in Christ, but we are all one in Christ!

Please, stop lying to another generation because you cling to the ideals of male patriarchy. God calls us to unity, equality, and freedom, not superstition and the disempowerment of women. I cannot believe a loving God would tell me to pursue a calling that you so blatantly call the devil's lie.

By the way, it is now finals week at my school. I have spent the past several days staying up late in an effort to finish all of my assignments, and finish them well. To think all this could be avoided if only I was an obedient daughter and consigned myself to do nothing but wash the dishes and wait on daddy at home. Sigh.

Anyway, I would like to close by asking you not to send me anymore of your unsolicited \*\*\*\*. I did not ask

you to send me this garbage, so please do not waste any more of your time or resources, because your lies fall on deaf ears.

Sincerely,

S. S. — Virginia Beach, VA

Dear S. S.

Decisions, decisions, decisions. How they affect our life! We all have to make such monumental decisions ... like deciding if there is a God or not. Then, if we decide that He exists, what does He have to say to us humans? And then, when He has spoken, we have to decide what He meant by it.

You are certainly an ambitious lady. Now you have to decide where to use your energies. You—and we—have to decide what God's will is for ambitious young ladies.

You have decided that when the Bible speaks of women submitting to men, it was simply a Greek cultural thing, not a mandate from God Himself. You have decided that when Paul wrote about such things as women keeping silence in the churches (1 Co. 14:34), not to teach a man (1 Ti. 2:12) being keepers at home (Ti. 2:5), and not being called to be bishops or deacons (1 Ti. 3:2,12), it was just Paul's Greek culture coming out, not an eternal calling for women—distinct from that of a man—of God's own choosing.

You have decided that when Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28 “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus,” that he was referring to equality of role, not the unity of the body, from which body no gender or race was excluded. (Meaning ... Greeks, slaves, and women do not form a separate body from Jews, freemen, and males. But that does *not* mean that the one body does not have different callings for the different members.)

You have decided that becoming wise in this world has more value than washing the dishes for your father. You have decided that a woman asserting herself and her abilities is of more value than the “superstition” of “the head of the woman is the man.” 1 Co. 11:3

You have also decided that you “cannot believe a loving God would tell me to pursue a calling that you so blatantly call the devil's lie.”

While we have come to different conclusions than you have on most of your decisions, in this last one we concur. A “loving God” did *not* tell you to pursue a calling contrary to the teachings of the New Testament.

So if the “loving God,” our sweet heavenly Father, did not tell you to pursue that calling, which god (god with a small “g”) did?

And, finally, you have decided to drop your subscription to *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*. We understand; we do not want to “hound” people who have decided to take a differ-

ent course than what we have chosen. If and when you ever decide to simply take the teachings of the New Testament at face value, we will be glad to put you back on the list.

In saying all of the above, we do not want to leave the impression that we “have it all together” and have no faults or misconceptions about biblical truth. We are simply saying that we have decided to take an entirely different view of Scriptures than what you have decided.

And so we must part ways. We hope the best for you as you make your decisions! ~

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Dear Sir,

First off I would like to thank you very much for all the sacrificial time and effort you put into the publication “The Remnant.” It truly is good to see you put forth so much effort for God’s Kingdom.

There is something, though, that does trouble me about the magazine; it seems as I read it I discern a spirit of legalism, could you say? You’re probably asking yourself what I mean, and in what ways, so I hope you understand more clearly by the end of this e-mail. Let me start first by telling you the journey God has brought me on so you can better understand where I’m coming from.

I was born and raised in a typical Anabaptist church, was saved when I was 12, and then baptized with my peers. We obeyed the rules of the church and did what was “right,” and so I lived a “happy” life. Then a couple years ago God woke me up with a BANG and started leading me on an incredible journey, a journey of seeking Him!

As He led me I realized certain previous ideas I had were false. The first thing He showed me was that He didn’t care that I was Anabaptist; what mattered to Him was that I love Him with my whole heart, soul, strength, and mind, and seek Him with my whole heart. I realized God wanted my heart above all else. He wanted me to keep His commandments because I love Him and not because the church told me to, or because that’s the way we always did it. I cannot express the real sense of freedom I felt in knowing this; it truly was indescribable!

This took me to a whole new level. I finally realized the true HOLINESS of God. He showed me this holiness of His all throughout the Old Testament; people came into His presence and dropped dead because of little issues they had in their lives! That is HOLY! God is the epitome of holiness. I now realized when I sin I didn’t just break

one of God’s rules, but it is much, much more than that. I am the temple of God, and so when I sinned I marred the very holiness of God! This brought me to such brokenness before God. I really believe that God wants us to see Him as He is, a HOLY God, and realize our coal black sinfulness, and how He still loves us; it’s amazing! We can’t help but become broken before Him.

Another thing God showed me was that a person’s heart really is all that matters, because everything else that he does is just fruit; what’s in the heart will come out. We sometimes talk about how we need to work on the fruits of the Spirit in our lives, we need to be more joyful, we need to have more patience, and so on. But that’s just fruit! It’s like telling an apple tree to bear oranges; it’s not going to happen. We need to fall on our faces and beg God to give us more of His Spirit if we want the fruits of His Spirit!

These are some things God has led me through in my journey of seeking Him.

As far as your magazine goes, some concerns I have would be that it seems to push the Anabaptist agenda more than Christ’s agenda.

It also seems to focus on talking against outward things, the fruit, instead of focusing on what’s wrong with the heart, which would be the root of the matter. You could focus on teaching people how to love God more and seek Him, which truly is the base of all Christian-

ity and Jesus’ teachings, and deal with root matters instead of symptoms of deeper issues; once you deal with root problems, the symptoms will go away. It seems to be a tendency of us Anabaptists, or us as humans as a matter of fact, to look at our brother and see him doing such and such “wrong” things and focus on that instead of figuring out and ministering to the need of his heart, and then start helping him by lifting him up in constant prayer. That is some of the concerns I had about your magazine; I hope you understand. Feel free to ask any questions.

Thank you for taking the time to read and prayerfully consider this e-mail.

God bless!

A Concerned Brother — Abbeville, SC

Dear Concerned Brother:

First of all, thank you for writing and expressing your concerns in a nice, direct way, without the unnecessary and unedifying name-calling that happens all too often when someone brings concerns to another person. (You could have called us “bigoted, cross-eyed Pharisees of the first

Legalism is not caused by having practical applications to kingdom principles.

degree” or something of that sort.) We will address your concerns in the same order that you presented them.

1) Legalism – Any church that makes practical applications to biblical principles will eventually face the situation you found yourself in. That is, there will be those (like you confessed about yourself in the past) who go through the motions, outwardly complying with many of the applications that the church expects (e.g. not having a TV, wearing a head covering, attending church services, or whatever), but whose heart is simply not “there.” It happens in Anabaptist churches, it happens in Methodist churches, it happens in Moravian churches, it happens everywhere.

“It happens” means legalism happens. Legalism is not caused by having practical applications (whether that means a written “church standard” or an “unwritten standard”) to kingdom principles. Legalism is caused by not having the heart in what the person is doing. If a person’s heart is not in what they are doing—be that a “liberal” or a “conservative”—you can be assured that there will be a legalistic approach to what they are doing.

The cure to legalism is not—as many people wrongly assume—to do away with the making of practical applications to the teachings of Jesus. The only cure for legalism will be getting the person’s heart into following Jesus. Once the person’s heart is in what he is doing, the practical applications will usually go far beyond what the church expects as a “minimum.”

It is like trying to get a man interested in crocheting. Most men do not find crocheting as something that they just naturally enjoy doing. So, not too many men crochet. Suppose now that a law was made that every man had to crochet for at least 10 minutes every day, or they would be fined \$100. How many men would decide that they would just go ahead and crochet for an hour, since they have to do it for 10 minutes anyway? I suppose a few might find that they enjoy it and make it a lifelong passion. But I would guess that 99% of the men in this world would set a clock and crochet for exactly 10 minutes every day—not a minute more—to avoid the fine. That is a very legalistic approach to the crocheting law. In fact, many men would cut the time short or skip it entirely if they thought they could get by with it.

The reason that most men would find crocheting for 10 minutes to be legalism is not because men are not capable of crocheting, nor because they couldn’t find 10 minutes in a day to do their duty. The problem would be that their heart is not in it.

Do you see the point? The “rules” that many churches have are not necessarily bad rules. Sure, some churches have

kept old rules that were once maybe a good application, but are now more of a hindrance than a help. But the bottom line is that getting rid of the old rules will not get rid of the legalism. The only way, and I repeat, the *only* way, to rid churches of legalism is to get people’s hearts into serving God.

And suddenly a lot of the “rules” will make sense. In fact, once a person has thrown his whole heart into serving God, the “rule” to not have a TV (for example) will not be seen as some legalistic hoop that one has to jump through (and break by sneaking to the neighbors on Super Bowl Sunday) but as a beautiful application to a biblical principle. No longer will the person be tempted to sneak to the neighbors to watch the Super Bowl, but he may well be tempted to share Christ with his neighbor and tell them how the Super Bowl is really Jacob’s bowl of pottage.

Now, instead of not having a TV, the man freed from a legalistic spirit will find himself emptying his life of other carnal distractions besides the TV—CDs, Internet, iPod, camera, cell phone, sport hunting, skiing, volleyball, horse racing ... who knows what all—anything and everything that doesn’t draw him to Christ. And so the man freed from legalism will find himself having a lot higher “standard” than the man bound in a legalistic approach to serving Jesus.

2) Holiness – Yes, God is holy. And He has called us to be holy, as He is. A passion to live a holy life for the glory of God will certainly take one far beyond the legalistic approach of only doing what the church expects. A passion to be holy as He is will take one on a journey of practical separation that will often set the pilgrim apart even in his own congregation. The highway of holiness is not a well-traveled route. Those who tread it know what loneliness is ... at least loneliness from human company. God bless you as you seek to walk in holiness with Him.

3) The heart is the only thing that matters – In this you err. This is a common error, so don’t feel bad. It is a preva-



**Did Jesus say, “Wash only the inside of the cup, as that is the only thing that matters?”**

lent error in many people who have come from your type of background—conservative churches that have drifted into a legalistic (remember, “legalistic” means “heart not in it”) service to God. People see the focus on just outwardly obeying the “rules,” and they jump—in reaction—out of that into the erroneous idea that “it’s only the inside that counts.” The old saying fits here: “They jumped out of the frying pan into the fire.”

Let me ask you ... did Jesus say, “Wash only the inside of the cup, as that is the only thing that matters?” Or did He say, “Wash the inside so that the outside may become clean?” Of course, He said the latter. Trying to say that it is “only the heart that matters” is like saying that cups only have to be clean inside. Jesus’ point is that cleansing has to *start* on the inside. But it doesn’t stop there. Until the outside is also clean, it is not a clean cup.

To put it quite bluntly, the Bible never says anywhere that it is “only the heart that matters.” While it is true that our heart is the seat of many of our actions, it is also true that our actions affect our heart. Jesus told us to lay up treasures in heaven, since where our treasures are, our heart will be. This is a clear example of how one’s actions can affect the heart.

4) Roots vs. fruits – Yes, roots produce fruits, but the branches also help produce the fruits ... and help make roots. If Jesus says He will prune us so that we bear much fruit, do we err in also speaking out against those parts of our life that are not producing good fruit or helping to nourish the roots? Or, if we see puny fruit, do we err in pointing that out, and challenging our readers (and ourselves!) to come to terms with it?

No, we do not uphold the idea of trying to hang some apples on a tree and calling it an apple tree. But neither do we uphold the idea that all one should do is preach about maintaining good roots. Perhaps you are too young to have watched it, or have not read much church history, but we have both personally seen it and read enough church history to realize that churches that never preach and teach about “outward” things never mature, much less endure. Jesus told us to “teach all nations ... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Mt. 28:19-20 Did Jesus never make practical, “outward” applications?

All that said, we do want to include more devotional-type articles in future issues of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*. There are a lot of devotional writings available, but we are not too keen on using writings from people who do not follow Christ’s teachings. For example, E. M. Bounds has written nine volumes on prayer. Yet, he served as a chaplain in the Confederate Army, and never expressed regrets for doing so (that we are aware of). Speaking metaphorically

here, but what good does it do to pray so much that you wear holes in the oak flooring with your knees, only to get up and encourage men in blasting the brains out of fellow Methodists in a civil war?

That is speaking rather bluntly, but that is the problem we run into when looking for devotional-type articles to publish. We may occasionally use materials from men like E. M. Bounds, but we do so with caution. If his devotional methods and teachings led him into direct disobedience to King Jesus, shouldn’t we use caution in reading them?

5) Anabaptism – We will make a deal with you. We will not publish so many Anabaptist materials, nor uphold their testimony so strongly, if you will kindly show us another group in church history that has a better record of following Jesus, or has a better doctrinal basis than the Anabaptist revival has had. OK, the ball is in your court now. ☺

We are not ashamed to hold up Anabaptism as a model of revival. Were they the only model we can uphold? No, we also have upheld early Moravianism. And the Bohemian Brethren and Waldensians. To a lesser degree, we can look to early Methodism, Quakers, and even the Church of Christ movement.

But let’s get real. Moravianism is dead. There is not, to our knowledge, a single Moravian Brethren congregation left that still practices the Sermon on the Mount. Methodism is in about the same boat, with a few sparks of fire left here or there in some of its offshoots. The Church of Christ movement still has a few straggling congregations that put to practice Jesus’ teachings, but they are rare also.

Go through the teachings of Jesus, starting with the Sermon on the Mount. As you read through that one sermon, weed out all churches that are not making a sincere attempt to put it into practice. Then hit a few other biblical points like women submitting to their husbands and keeping silence in the churches, modest apparel, covered heads for women, separation of church and state, separation from worldliness ...

How many churches/church movements are left? The point is, at least here in North America, Anabaptism represents basically the only revival movement that has survived into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Five hundred years and 15 generations of producing godly people (of which not all of them were godly, of course) is a pretty impressive track record. We challenge you (and ourselves!) to start a revival that does better than that! Imagine starting a revival that is still producing thousands of holy, godly people, 500 years later!

To be sure, many of today’s Anabaptist churches have lost their first love. Some have went belly-up by compromising, to the point that they do not even represent kingdom living any more. Others have drifted into a dreadful

formalism. But underneath the formalism is still often found a foundational theology of practical obedience to all the teachings of Jesus—something that many Evangelical churches never had to start with. The Bible is painfully clear on that point—if we do not obey Jesus, we do not love Him. Jn 14:21-24 By lifting up Anabaptism as an example of real revival, it is our hope that their example will provoke a revival of living according to the King's rules, both within modern lukewarm Anabaptism, and without (including us!).

We long for something deeper than miscarriages like the Welsh revival (the revival lasted about a decade or less, and never did produce churches that lived by the Sermon on the Mount) and emotional shindigs. By the latter I refer to, as an example, a former Old Order Amish church that berates their former condition as “traditionalism.” They now sport a banjo in their church meetings, the children are taught to dance, and the minister danced—“in the Spirit”—with another man's wife in a meeting. And, of course, that lady wore no head covering. People who do not practice nonresistance are held up as great teachers. And besides, people who are divorced and remarried while their first spouse still lives are now a part of the congregation.

Revival??? If that's revival, save us from it!

(That is not to say that we have arrived at where we should be either, but if we do not have high goals, we will never grow better fruit.)

God helps us all as we find our way! Walk circumspectly! Oh, and don't forget to send us those writings from that revival movement that has a better track record and theological foundation than Anabaptism has. We will gladly publish them!

And pray for us, that we may attain what we publish! ~

Not everyone who writes us is negative or has concerns about what we publish. In fact, positive letters and comments personally received probably outnumber the negative ones by a ratio of about five to one. The following little note, received in a personal e-mail, is very typical of a comment that we have heard (probably a score of times by now). A thank you to all of you who have dropped us a word of encouragement or an admonition or concern.

Keep writing us ... or, for most of you, START writing us! ~

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the latest issue of *The Remnant*. Seven or eight years ago, I usually just flipped through *The Remnant* magazine, reading a little here and there. Now, I read it cover to cover almost every issue. [The editors] are really doing a good job with the magazine.

D.B. — Amberson, PA